United Nations S/2015/324

Security Council

Distr.: General
8 May 2015

Original: English

Letter dated 8 May 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward to you a concept note for the Security Council ministerial briefing on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts (foreign terrorist fighters), which will be held on 29 May 2015 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Raimonda **Murmokaitė**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

15-07353 (E) 130515

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 8 May 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council ministerial briefing on foreign terrorist fighters

In September 2014, the Security Council, at a summit at the level of Heads of Government chaired by the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, adopted resolution 2178 (2014) to respond to the acute and emerging threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters. In the months since, much has been accomplished by Member States, the United Nations and other international, regional and subregional organizations to counter the threat. Recent studies and assessments, however, indicate that the flow of foreign terrorist fighters into conflict zones is continuing and that more needs to be done to tackle the phenomenon.

Lithuania will host a briefing attended by interior ministers (or their equivalents) to assess how far the international community has come since September 2014 in countering the flow of foreign terrorist fighters into conflict zones. The goal of the session will be to identify specific priority action for the full implementation of resolution 2178 (2014). It will be the first time that the Security Council has met in the format of interior ministers (or their equivalents). The unique format recognizes the critical role that interior ministries (and related government offices) must play in responding to this complex threat to international peace and security.

Continuing threat of foreign terrorist fighters

As the Security Council noted in 2014, the problem of terrorists travelling to foreign conflicts is not new, but the threat has become grave and is continuing, with an unprecedented flow of fighters and facilitation networks fuelling multiple conflicts worldwide, such as in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, Yemen and Libya. The latest reports indicate that there are now more than 25,000 known foreign terrorist fighters from in excess of 100 countries who have travelled to join or fight for terrorist entities associated with Al-Qaida, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

Foreign terrorist fighters not only exacerbate existing conflicts, as observed in many conflict zones today, but also can return home possessing new skills and connections, increasing the threat of home-grown terrorist attacks, which the international community has recently witnessed. In addition, not only are foreign terrorist fighters a threat today, but terrorist networks forged in current conflicts could pose a threat for decades to come.

Resolution 2178 (2014), a landmark response to the threat, provided a comprehensive framework for the international community's response. Since its adoption, Member States have rapidly responded, including by adopting appropriate laws and regulations to deal with foreign terrorist fighters within their territories and taking the measures necessary to prevent such fighters from transiting across borders and to address the violent extremism fuelling the phenomenon. International and regional organizations have also adopted new frameworks and protocols to guide their members on how to implement the resolution and enhance subregional,

regional and international coordination and cooperation. Nevertheless, more must be done to mobilize the additional resources and technical expertise needed to build the appropriate infrastructure, processes and mechanisms and employ them to effectively prevent and counter the movement of foreign terrorist fighters, especially among the most affected origin, transit, neighbouring and destination States.

Priority action to implement resolution 2178 (2014)

The ministerial briefing would highlight the principal challenges faced by Member States in implementing the core provisions of resolution 2178 (2014): adopting new national laws to criminalize the travel, financing, recruitment and facilitation of foreign terrorist fighters; countering the flow of fighters through improved border security, information collection and sharing; countering recruitment and facilitation; and increasing and enhancing international cooperation through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms.

The interior ministers (or their equivalents) would then focus on tangible steps that Member States and the international community should take as a matter of priority to implement resolution 2178 (2014) fully. Such steps may include improving legal frameworks for criminalization of offences, strengthening border management, making better use of law enforcement tools, sharing foreign terrorist fighter travel information and marshalling resources and expertise for the most affected States to further build their capacity and provide technical assistance. With a focus on implementation and execution, the Security Council should provide more specific direction to the international community on how to comply with the obligations found in the resolution and on what enforcement and preventive action should be taken to have a greater impact, while at the same time respecting human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.

Furthermore, the Security Council should encourage even closer cooperation between its principal counter-terrorism expert bodies — the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1526 (2004) — and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force on the issue. Those bodies should harmonize efforts to strategically deliver needs-based capacity-building assistance to the most affected States as expeditiously as possible. To that end, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Monitoring Team should share their analyses with the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force to jointly develop a capacity-building assistance plan to counter foreign terrorist fighters, to be implemented in the near future, and to identify additional donors and implementers who may be able to assist Member States with complementary or supplementary assistance to build the needed capabilities and expertise.

Thematic session

To frame the discussion, the Secretary-General will provide a briefing on the scope of the foreign terrorist fighter problem, its effect on current conflicts and the Organization's efforts to tackle it. The Chairs of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities and the Security Council Committee

established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism will then provide a briefing on their efforts in that regard, including the assessments of the Monitoring Team and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate in relation to the foreign terrorist fighter threat and what more needs to be done. The Secretary-General of the International Criminal Police Organization will also provide a briefing on that body's efforts to counter the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, including in terms of assistance and services provided to States.

The interior ministers (or equivalents) would then be invited to speak. They may wish to refer to:

(a) Their views on priority action that must be taken in the short term to fully implement resolution 2178 (2014) and counter the foreign terrorist fighter threat;

(b) Experience in creating new laws or adapting existing laws to criminalize foreign terrorist fighter travel, recruitment and facilitation and how they employ them for law enforcement activities;

(c) Challenges that they face in securing their borders against foreign terrorist fighters and prosecuting individuals who seek to join terrorist organizations, as well as lessons learned and solutions found;

(d) Obstacles faced and/or solutions discovered to collect and share needed foreign terrorist fighter and traveller data within and across borders to improve monitoring and interdiction efforts;

(e) Areas in which they may have special capacity and expertise to assist others to improve criminalization, border security and information collection, analysis or sharing;

(f) Views on the ability of the United Nations system and regional and subregional organizations to bolster State capacity to counter the movement of foreign terrorist fighters.

The adoption of a presidential statement that would encourage States to take action to implement resolution 2178 (2014) is foreseen.